

Jan. 20, 2010

County “STARS” Highlight Innovation, Performance Board Recognizes Programs that Make a Difference, Save Money

REDWOOD CITY, Calif. – The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors has honored three innovative County-run programs for providing outstanding results.

The Board presented STARS Awards to the Prenatal to 3 program, the San Mateo Medical Center Pain Management Clinic and the Drink Hetch Hetchy campaign.

STARS Awards recognize outstanding programs that demonstrate innovation, collaboration and customer service. The Board launched the STARS Awards in December 2006 to highlight the outstanding work employees accomplish.

“The STARS Awards highlight how County employees are using ingenuity to provide excellent service while finding cost savings wherever possible,” Board President Richard S. Gordon said. “All of our employees need to work together to find ways to close our budget deficit and the STARS Awards exemplify and reward that spirit.”

The Health System’s Prenatal to 3 received the STARS Program Performance Award. Created in 1996, the program offers health services to low-income expectant parents and families with children up to 5 years old. The program has successfully served more than 3,000 clients over the past year. San Mateo County has among the highest rates of prenatal care in the first trimester – 88 percent – in California.

The San Mateo Medical Center’s Pain Management Clinic received the Customer Service Award. At the clinic, a patient receives a comprehensive treatment plan that may include intensive case management, medication management, therapy and referrals.

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest mark, surveys from 1,234 first-year patients showed satisfaction with treatment at 9.08, satisfaction with the warmth and respect of staff at 9.71 and satisfaction with the skills and competencies of the staff at 9.75.

The Drink Hetch Hetchy initiative, which eliminated the use of County funds to buy bottled water, received the Green Award. The County’s Green Team recommended the Drink Hetch Hetchy initiative to help reduce the County’s carbon footprint and save taxpayer dollars. The Board approved the Drink Hetch Hetchy initiative in 2009.

The County is expected to save about \$140,000 annually by eliminating the purchase of bottled water.

The STARS Awards provide programs with financial incentives that can be used for training, to further the program or other specific uses. Prenatal to 3 received \$35,000, SMMC Pain Management Clinic received \$5,000 and Drink Hetch Hetchy received \$5,000.

In addition, five suggestions from employees received STARS Employee Suggestion Awards. These were:

- Initiate an urgent care clinic and improve emergency department triage
- Provide formal Spanish language classes for physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and nurses
- Establish a child welfare cross-county social work visitation agreement to cut down on travel and hotel expenses
- Implement a technology upgrade to allow inspectors to immediately input inspection results utilizing cell phones from the field into an automated system
- Send invitations for new contracts out to bid by e-mail

A total of \$1,280 was awarded to employees for these cost-saving suggestions.

Several programs were recognized as honorable mentions. For Program Performance, these were: the Sheriff Office's Domestic Violence Firearms Compliance Unit; Pathways, led by the Health System in collaboration with Probation; and the Health System's Pharmacy Patient Assistance Program. Each program received \$7,500.

For Customer Service, the Assessor-Clerk-Recorder's Assessment Roll Tracker received an honorable mention and \$2,500.

As a Green Award honorable mention, the Sheriff Office's Green IT: Virtual Services received \$1,500.

A total of 17 programs were nominated for awards. The County also received 78 employee suggestions.

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